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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF: FITZPATRICK CONF. NO: 9232

GROUP ART UNIT: 3628

SERIAL NO: 09/730,592

FILED: December 7, 2000

EXAMINER: CHARLES

FOR: Price Paid Database

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

ALEXANDRIA, VA 22213-1450

37 CFR 41.37 APPEAL BRIEF

Sir:

In response to the office action mailed November 4, 2004 and further in response to the office communication mailed May 31, 2005 regarding the filing of a non-compliant appeal brief, the applicants submit this appeal.

Table of Contents

I. **37 CFR 41.37 (a)(1) and (2)**

On February 4, 2004, the applicant (1) filed a Notice of Appeal under 41.31 and (2) paid the fee set forth in 41.20(b)(2).

II. **37 CFR 41.37 (b)**

The filing is timely. Accordingly, this subsection is not relevant.

III. **37 CFR 41.37 (c)(1)**

A. **37 CFR 41.37 (c)(1)(i) Real Party in Interest**

The real party in interest is Catalina Marketing International, Inc., a Delaware corporation, which is wholly owned by Catalina Marketing Corporation, a Delaware corporation.

B. **37 CFR 41.37 (c)(1)(ii) Related Appeals and Interferences**

There are no related appeals and interferences. Accordingly, this subsection is not relevant.

C. **37 CFR 41.37 (c)(1)(iii) Status of Claims**

Claims 1-55 are pending, rejected, and under appeal.

D. **37 CFR 41.37 (c)(1)(iv) Status of Amendments**

All amendments are entered.

E. **37 CFR 41.37 (c)(1)(v) Summary of the Claimed Subject Matter**

The invention of claim 1 defines a computer-implemented method (specification page 4 line 27 through page 5 line 8) comprising the steps of: obtaining information from a plurality of retail stores to determine an identification (specification page 8 lines 13-14) and price paid for purchased items (specification page 8 lines 7-8); recording in a central price-paid database remote from the retail stores at least one of an item identification and the price-paid for each of

the purchased items (specification page 5 lines 12-14) by recurrently obtaining on a predetermined schedule from checkout computers at the retail stores said information about the price paid for purchased items (specification page 5 lines 25-27); and publishing the price-paid database (specification page 8 lines 17-20).

The invention of claim 24 defines a system for enabling a user to obtain psuedo-real-time data on prices paid for purchased items at a plurality of retail stores (specification page 5 lines 29-31), comprising: a scanner configured to determine an identification of the purchased items; a checkout computer connected to the scanner and configured to determine a price paid for each of the purchased items (specification page 8 lines 1-5); and a central computer remote from the retail stores and configured to record from the plurality of retail stores in a price-paid database at least one of an item identification and the price-paid for each of the purchased items (specification page 7 line 29 through page 8 line 1), to recurrently obtain on a predetermined schedule information on the price paid for each of the purchased items from the retail stores (specification page 5 lines 25-27), and to publish the price-paid database (specification page 8 lines 17-20).

F. **37 CFR 41.37 (c)(1)(vi) Grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal**

Whether the examiner's objection to dependent claim 23 is improper, which would require the examiner to examine claim 23 on the merits.

Whether the rejections of claims 40, 44, and 52 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Reuhl et al. (USP 5,873,069) are improper and should be reversed.

Whether the rejections of claims 1, 2, 5, 14, 15, 16, 24, 25, 28, 50, 51, 53, 54, and 55 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Daniel, Jr. et al. (USP 4,972,504) [hereinafter "Daniel"], Shimoda et al. (USP 4,855,908) [hereinafter "Shimoda"], and Handley (USP 5,349,648) [hereinafter "Handley"] are improper and should be reversed.

G. **37 CFR 41.37 (c)(1)(vii) Argument**

1. **The Rejection of Claim 23 under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in an Improper Form because an Independent Claim is Indicated as Depending on Claims 1-22**

The examiner has failed to examine and allow claim 23, alleging that claim 23 is in an improper form, stating that:

> "Claim 23 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in an improper form because an independent claim is indicated as depending on claims 1-22. See MPEP 608.01(n). Accordingly, the claim 23 has not been further treated on the merits." [Office action mailed November 4, 2004 page 2 lines 13-15.]

In response, the applicant filed an amendment to claim 23 on June 6, 2004. The amendment to claim 23 addressed the informality noted in the office action mailed February 10, 2004 by following MPEP 608.01(n) I.A. **Acceptable Multiple Claim Wording** (the third listed example). Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the objection to claim 23 has been overcome.

The board should reverse the implied rejection of claim 23 because there is no statutory basis alleged by the examiner supporting rejection of claim 23.

2. **35 USC 102 Rejections**

a. **The Rejections of Claims 40, 44, and 52 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being Anticipated by Reuhl et al. (USP 5,873,069)**

The examiner has rejected claims 40, 44, and 52 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Reuhl et al. (USP 5,873,069).

In response, the applicant hereby acknowledges these rejections and elects not to respond further.

3. **35 USC 103 Rejections**

a. **The Rejections of Claims 1, 2, 5, 14, 15, 16, 24, 25, 28, 50, 51, 53, 54 and 55 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being Unpatentable over Daniel, Jr. et al., Shimoda et al., and Handley**

The examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 5, 14, 15, 16, 24, 25, 28, 50, 51, 53, 54 and 55 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Daniel, Jr. et al., Shimoda et al. and Handley, stating that:

"Re claims 1, 2, 5, 14, 15, 16, 24, 25, 28, 50, 51, 53, 54 and 55: Daniel, Jr. et al. disclose a computer-implemented method comprising the steps of: obtaining information from a plurality of retail stores to determine an identification and information for purchased items (Abstract); recording in a central information database remote from the retail stores at least one of an item identification and the information for each of the purchased items by recurrently obtaining on a predetermined schedule from checkout computers at the retail stores said information about the information for purchased items (Abstract, col. 4, line 15-40, col. 10, line 20-col.12, line 15, col. 16, lines 20-55).

Daniel, Jr. et al. disclose(s) the claimed invention except price-paid. However, in col. 4, line 60-col. 5, line 5 thereof, Shimoda et al. disclose(s) unit price vs. original unit price and the unit price is effectively the price paid. It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Daniel, Jr. et al. based on the teachings of Shimoda et al. The motivation to combine these references is to enhance in-store market research retail sales data collection and analysis.

Daniel, Jr. et al. and Shimoda et al. disclose(s) the claimed invention except publishing the information database. However, in Abstract, col. 1, line 60-col. 2, line 30 thereof, Handley disclose(s) a publishing database in which different parts of the data are assembled from a database for publication. It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Daniel, Jr.

et al. and Shimoda et al. based on the teachings of Handley. The motivation to combine these references is it allows a number of publications to be in various stages of process at any one time and this means the price-paid data is in various stages of analysis before final publication." [Office action mailed November 4, 2004 page 4 line 6 through page 5 line 10.]

i. **Applicant's Response**

In summary, the limitation defined by the claims relating to information about price paid for purchased items is not disclosed by Daniel. This application clearly defines "price-paid" and the examiner's arguments ignore that definition.

(a) **Rejections of Claims 1 and 24 - Neither Daniel, Shimoda, nor Handley Disclose "information about the price paid for purchased items"**

In response, the applicant submits that Daniel does not disclose "information about the price paid for purchased items".

The examiner admits that Daniel does not disclose price-paid [office action mailed November 4, 2004 page 4 line 15]; and attempts to overcome this by combining the teachings of Daniel with Shimoda. However, Shimoda does not disclose "information about the price paid for purchased items" either.

The examiner cites to column 4 line 60 through column 5 line 5 of Shimoda, which states that:

"Referring to FIG. 5, the communication signal format comprises eleven sections 1 to 11, that is, an item length 1 indicating the byte number of a signal, an item identification 2, a signal identification code 3, a designation 4, an article code 5, a classification code 6 indicating the kind of article, a unit price 7, an article name 8, an attribute 9, a bank number and address code 10, and an original unit price 11." [Shimoda column 4 line 60 through column 5 line 5.]

Based on this passage, the examiner concludes that Shimoda discloses "information about

the price paid for purchased items". This conclusion appears to be based on the unit price contained in the Price Look-Up table, which is defined at column 1 lines 25-31 of Shimoda. However, (1) the foregoing passage does not support the examiner's assertion and (2) Shimoda does not disclose "information about the price paid for purchased items", as evidenced by column 1 lines 25-31 of Shimoda, which states that:

> "The POS terminal also comprises at least one memory device used as a Price Look-Up (PLU) table for storing article codes, article names, unit prices, and the like. Conventionally, the PLU table is provided in the POS terminal because this table must be frequently indexed by an operator at the POS terminal." [Shimoda column 1 lines 25-31.]

In this passage, Shimoda describes the Price Look-Up (PLU) table as a table for storing unit prices. The PLU is then provided in the point of sale terminal for access by the operator. Based on this passage, Shimoda clearly identifies the unit prices stored in the PLU table to be static "list prices". In contrast, the price paid, as defined by the pending claims, is the list price, less any customer discount.

The subject application details how important the distinction is between a list price and the actual price paid by the customer, and thereby defines "price paid" as different from the list price disclosed in Shimoda, stating that:

> "Consumer purchases these days are becoming increasingly more competitive. To entice consumers to buy a particular product, many retailers and discounters are using a frequent shopper card which, when presented at the time of purchase, substantially reduces the price of the item from that available to members of the public who have no frequent shopper card. These price discounts can vary as merchants use discounts to entice sales in items which will soon expire, be superceded by other items, or in which the distributors or manufacturers have themselves added promotional incentives. While such discount incentives are apparently mutually beneficial to the seller and buyer, knowledge of the actual

price paid is critical in determining price margins and the price-acceptance by a customer." [Specification page 1 lines 11-19.]

Thus, this application defines "price paid" to mean price paid, accounting for discounts to the default or look-up price.

Data reflecting not the inventory list price nor the advertised sales price but rather the actual price paid is needed from across many sources to ensure reliable statistical determinations to be valid. The present invention overcomes these problems by a central price-paid database that recurrently obtains on a predetermined schedule from checkout computers at retail stores information about the price paid for purchased items. Thus, providing a pseudo-real time database to capture actual prices paid. Consequently, price margins and price acceptance can be determined by the present invention more quickly than would otherwise be possible in systems where sales prices and price lists are recorded.

Shimoda does not disclose (1) the "price paid" concept, (2) a central price paid database, remote from the retails stores, (3) recurrently obtaining price paid information, and (4) publishing a price-paid database storing "information about the price paid for purchased items", as defined by claims 1 and 24.

Moreover, the examiner does not provide support that Handley discloses "information about the price paid for purchased items". In fact, Handley discloses an automatic high speed publishing system and does not teach the "price paid" concept. Since neither Daniel, Shimoda, nor Handley teach the "price paid" concept, the three references in combination do not disclose "information about the price paid for purchased items." Therefore, the rejections of claims 1 and 24 are improper and should be reversed.

Claims 2-23, 25-39, 50, 51, 53, and 54 depend from independent claims 1 and 24. Therefore, the rejections of claims 2-23, 25-39, 50, 51, 53, and 54 should be reversed for the same reasons as those reasons presented for claims 1 and 24.

(b) **Rejections of Claims 1 and 24 - There is no Motivation to Modify the Invention of Daniel and Shimoda Based on the Teachings of Handley**

The examiner's express motivation to modify the invention of Daniel and Shimoda based on the teachings of Handley because neither Daniel nor Shimoda disclose "publishing the price-paid database." The examiner states the following rationale for modifying the invention of Daniel and Shimoda based on the teachings of Handley:

> "It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Daniel, Jr. et al. and Shimoda et al. based on the teachings of Handley. The motivation to combine these references is it allows a number of publications to be in various stages of process at any one time and this means the price-paid data is in various stages of analysis before final publication." [Office action mailed November 4, 2004 page 5 lines 6-10.]

The examiner is attempting to combine a market research retail sales data collection system (Daniel) with a point of sale system (Shimoda), with an automatic high speed publishing system that has nothing to do with retail sales (Handley). This circular logic, where the proposition to be proved is contained in one of the premises, does not carry the examiner's burden to state a motivation to combine the three inventions. The legal requirement is that "the examiner must show reasons that the skilled artisan, confronted with the same problems as the inventor and with no knowledge of the claimed invention, would select the elements from the cited prior art references for combination in the manner claimed." In re Rouffet, ___ F.3d ___, ___, ___ USPQ2d ___, ___ (Fed. Cir. July 15, 1998). The examiner's circular logic does not meet this requirement. Therefore, the rejections of claims 1 and 24 are improper and should be reversed.

Moreover, neither Daniel, Shimoda, nor Handley discloses capturing price-paid data. As stated above, the examiner admits that Daniel does not disclose price-paid [office action mailed November 4, 2004 page 4 line 15]; and as proven above, Shimoda does not disclose "information about the price paid for purchased items"; nor does Handley. Since neither Daniel, Shimoda, nor

Handley disclose capturing price-paid data, the three references in combination do not disclose "publishing the price-paid database." Therefore, the rejections of claims 1 and 24 are improper and should be reversed.

Claims 2-23, 25-39, 50, 51, 53, and 54 depend from independent claims 1 and 24. Therefore, the rejections of claims 2-23, 25-39, 50, 51, 53, and 54 should be reversed for the same reasons as those reasons presented for claims 1 and 24.

(c) **Rejection of Claim 24 - Daniel does not Disclose "A system for enabling a user to obtain pseudo-real-time data on prices paid for purchased items at a plurality of retail stores"**

In response, the applicant submits that Daniel does not disclose "a system for enabling a user to obtain pseudo-real-time data on prices paid for purchased items at a plurality of retail stores", as alleged by the examiner and recited in claim 24. The examiner's rejection of claim 24 does not address, nor does Daniel disclose, the recitation in claim 24 that a user is obtaining the psuedo-real-time data. Specifically, the recitation "Each in-store device continuously monitors, detects, interprets, processes and stores retail sales transactions data from its retail store for subsequent transmittal to the central site." Abstract in Daniel. See also figure 2 in Daniel, which does not show access by a user. Daniel discloses collecting retail information and transmitting it to a central site for use by market researchers. The recitation in claim 24 that a user is obtaining the psuedo-real-time data is disclosed by the subject application's description of a user being able to access the system to obtain psuedo-real-time data. See for example Figure 1 (100, 104, and 106) and the description thereof at page 4 line 20 through page 5 line 2 of the specification. For the additional reasons that Daniel does not disclose "a system for enabling a user to obtain pseudo-real-time data on prices paid for purchased items at a plurality of retail stores", the rejection of claim 24 is improper and should be reversed.

Claims 25-39, 51, and 54 depend from independent claim 24. Therefore, the rejections of claims 25-39, 51, and 54 should be reversed for the same reasons as those reasons presented for

claim 24.

(d) **The Applied Prior Art Fails to Address the "Price Differential" Limitation of Claims 6-13, 15-23, 29-33, 35-39, and 44-49**

Moreover, claims 6-13, 15-23, 29-33, 35-39, and 44-49 each define limitations of the "price differential" between the list price and actual price paid. Since the applied prior art does not disclose recording actual price paid, the applied prior art provides no suggestion to define any of the limitations in these claims relating to determining, using, or storing the "price differential". Therefore, the rejections under 35 USC 103(a) of claims 6-13, 15-23, 29-33, 35-39, and 44-49 are improper and should be reversed for these additional reasons.

H. 37 CFR 41.37 (c)(1)(viii) Claims Appendix

Appendix I is attached which contains a copy of the claims involved in the appeal.

I. 37 CFR 41.37 (c)(1)(ix) Evidence Appendix

There is no evidence submitted pursuant to 1.130, 1.131, or 1.132 of this title or any other evidence entered by the examiner and relied upon by appellant in the appeal. Accordingly, this section is inapplicable.

J. 37 CFR 41.37 (c)(1)(x) Related Proceedings Appendix

There are no related appeals or interferences under (c)(1)(ii) of this section. Accordingly, this section is inapplicable.

IV. 37 CFR 41.37 (c)(2)

This brief does not include any new or non-admitted amendment, or any new or non-admitted affidavit or other evidence.

V. **37 CFR 41.37 (d)**

This appeal brief complies with all the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section.

VI. **37 CFR 41.37 (e)**

The applicant timely filed a notice of appeal on February 4, 2005 with suitable extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136.

Respectfully Submitted,

6/15/2005

DATE

Richard A. Neifeld
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 35,299

BTM/DS/BTM
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Appendix I

1. A computer-implemented method comprising the steps of:

obtaining information from a plurality of retail stores to determine an identification and price paid for purchased items;

recording in a central price-paid database remote from the retail stores at least one of an item identification and the price-paid for each of the purchased items by recurrently obtaining on a predetermined schedule from checkout computers at the retail stores said information about the price paid for purchased items; and

publishing the price-paid database.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of obtaining the information comprises:

obtaining a customer identification associated with each purchased item.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the step of obtaining a customer identification comprises:

scanning at least one of a frequent shopper card, a credit card, a club member card, and a debit card.

4. The method of Claim 2, wherein the step of obtaining a customer identification comprises:

scanning at least one of a fingerprint, retinal scan, and a signature.

5. The method of Claim 2, wherein the step of obtaining the information comprises:

recording the identification and the price paid for each of the purchased items in the checkout computer; and

recurrently uploading the recorded identification and the price-paid to a central computer containing the price-paid database.

6. The method of Claim 5, further comprising:

comparing the price paid to an inventory list price;

recording at least one of the inventory list price and a price differential between the inventory list price and the price paid; and

recurrently uploading the at least one of the inventory list price and the price differential to the central computer.

7. The method of Claim 6, further comprising:

recording at least one of the customer identification and a store identification; and

recurrently uploading the at least one of the customer identification and a store identification to the central computer.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the step of recording comprises:

formatting the price-paid database into columnar entries, wherein the columnar entries include at least one of the customer identification, the store identification, the purchase item identification, the price-paid, the list price, and the price differential.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein the step of publishing comprises:

providing on a web page the price-paid database.

10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the step of providing comprises:

selecting from the web page price-paid information from at least one of a store selection, a customer selection, a brand selection, and a sales category selection within a specified district.

11. The method of Claim 9, wherein the step of selecting comprises:

determining one of a zip code and an area code of the user; and

restricting the specified district to an area within the one of a zip code and an area code.

12. The method of Claim 9, wherein the step of selecting comprises:

determining one of a remote district, a regional district, and a national district for the user; and

restricting the specified district to an area within the one of a remote district, a regional district, and a national district.

13. The method of Claim 9, wherein the step of providing comprises:

selecting from the web page price-paid information from stores within a specified district.

14. The method of Claim 2, wherein the step of obtaining the information comprises:

recurrently requesting transfer of the identification and the price-paid from the checkout computer to the central computer containing the price-paid database.

15. The method of Claim 14, further comprising:

recurrently requesting transfer of at least one of an inventory list price and a price differential between the inventory list price and the price paid to the central computer.

16. The method of Claim 15, further comprising:

recurrently requesting transfer of at least one of a customer identification and a store identification to the central computer.

17. The method of Claim 16, wherein the step of recording comprises:

formatting the price-paid database into columnar entries, wherein the columnar entries include at least one of the customer identification, the store identification, the purchase item identification, the price-paid, the list price, and the price differential.

18. The method of Claim 17, wherein the step of publishing comprises:

providing on a web page the price-paid database.

19. The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of providing comprises:

selecting from the web page price-paid information from at least one of a store selection, a customer selection, a brand selection, and a sales category selection within a specified district.

20. The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of selecting comprises:

determining one of a zip code and an area code of the user; and

restricting the specified district to an area within the one of a zip code and an area code.

21. The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of selecting comprises:

determining one of a remote district, a regional district, and a national district for the user; and

restricting the specified district to an area within the one of a remote district, a regional district, and a national district.

22. The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of providing comprises:

selecting from the web page price-paid information from stores within a specified district.

23. A computer readable medium containing program instructions for execution on a computer system which when executed by the computer system, cause the computer system to perform the method recited as in any one of claims 1-22.

24. A system for enabling a user to obtain psuedo-real-time data on prices paid for purchased items at a plurality of retail stores, comprising:

a scanner configured to determine an identification of the purchased items;

a checkout computer connected to the scanner and configured to determine a price paid for each of the purchased items; and

a central computer remote from the retail stores and configured to record from the plurality of retail stores in a price-paid database at least one of an item identification and the

price-paid for each of the purchased items, to recurrently obtain on a predetermined schedule information on the price paid for each of the purchased items from the retail stores, and to publish the price-paid database.

25. The system of Claim 24, wherein the scanner is configured to determine a customer identification.

26. The system of Claim 25, wherein the scanner is configured to scan at least one of a frequent shopper card, a credit card, a club member card, and a debit card.

27. The system of Claim 25, wherein the scanner is configured to scan at least one of a fingerprint, retinal scan, and a signature.

28. The system of Claim 24, wherein the checkout computer is configured to record a customer identification and the price paid for each of the purchased items in a checkout computer and recurrently upload the recorded identification and the price-paid to the central computer.

29. The system of Claim 28, wherein the checkout computer is further configured to compare the price paid to an inventory list price, record at least one of the inventory list price and a price differential between the inventory list price and the price paid, and recurrently upload the at least one of the inventory list price and the price differential to the central computer.

30. The system of Claim 29, wherein the checkout computer is configured to record at least one of the customer identification and a store identification and recurrently upload the at least one of the customer identification and a store identification to the central computer.

31. The system of Claim 30, wherein the central computer is configured to format the price-paid database into columnar entries, wherein the columnar entries include at least one of

the customer identification, the store identification, the purchase item identification, the price-paid, the list price, and the price differential.

32. The system of Claim 31, wherein the central computer is configured to publish a web page including the price-paid database.

33. The system of Claim 32, wherein the web page includes price-paid information from at least one of a store selection, a customer selection, a brand selection, and a sales category selection within a specified district.

34. The system of Claim 24, wherein the central computer is configured to recurrently request transfer of the identification and the price-paid from the checkout computer.

35. The system of Claim 34, wherein the central computer is configured to recurrently request transfer of at least one of an inventory list price and a price differential between the inventory list price and the price paid from the checkout computer.

36. The system of Claim 35, wherein the central computer is configured to recurrently request transfer of at least one of customer identification and a store identification from the checkout computer.

37. The system of Claim 36, wherein the central computer is configured to format the price-paid database into columnar entries, wherein the columnar entries include at least one of the customer identification, the store identification, the purchase item identification, the price-paid, the list price, and the price differential.

38. The system of Claim 37, wherein the central computer is configured to publish a web page including the price-paid database.

39. The system of Claim 38, wherein the web page includes price-paid information from at least one of a store selection, a customer selection, a brand selection, and a sales category selection within a specified district.

40. A price-paid database aggregated from a plurality of retail stores, comprising:

a first field for storing an item identification corresponding to an item purchased from the plurality of retail stores; and

a second field for storing the price paid for said item purchased.

41. The database of Claim 40, further comprising:

a third field for storing a customer identification.

42. The database of Claim 41, wherein the customer identification comprises:

at least one of a frequent shopper card, a credit card, a club member card, and a debit card.

43. The database of Claim 41, wherein the customer identification comprises:

at least one of a fingerprint, retinal scan, and a signature.

44. The database of Claim 40, further comprising:

a third field for storing at least one of the inventory list price and a price differential between the inventory list price and the price paid.

45. The database of Claim 44 wherein the price-paid database is configured to format the price-paid database into columnar entries, wherein the columnar entries include at least one of the customer identification, the store identification, the purchase item identification, the price-paid, the list price, and the price differential.

46. The database of Claim 45, wherein the information in the price-paid database is formatted to be displayed as a web page.

47. The database of Claim 46, wherein the web page permits selection from the web page of price-paid information from at least one of a store selection, a customer selection, a brand selection, and a sales category selection within a specified district.

48. The database of Claim 46, wherein the web page permits selection from the web page of price-paid information by one of a user zip code and a user telephone area code.

49. The database of Claim 46, wherein the web page permits selection from the web page of price-paid information by one of a remote district, a regional district, and a national district.

50. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of recording comprises:

recurrently recording the identification and the price paid at a point of sale received from a sequential request from the central computer to a checkout computer at each of the retail stores.

51. The system of Claim 24, wherein the central computer is configured to recurrently record the identification and the price paid at a point of sale received from a sequential request from the central computer to the checkout computer at each of the retail stores.

52. The database of Claim 40, wherein the price paid stored in the second field is received in the second field on a predetermined schedule made by a sequential request from the central computer to the checkout computer at each of the retail stores.

53. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of recording comprises:

recurrently recording the price paid at a point of sale by reporting the identification and the price paid to the central computer after a predetermined number of purchases have been

made.

54. The system of Claim 24, when the check out computer is configured to report the identification and the price paid to the central computer after a predetermined number of purchases have been made.

55. The database of Claim 40, wherein the price paid stored in the search field is received for a checkout computer on a predetermined schedule after a predetermined number of purchases have been made.